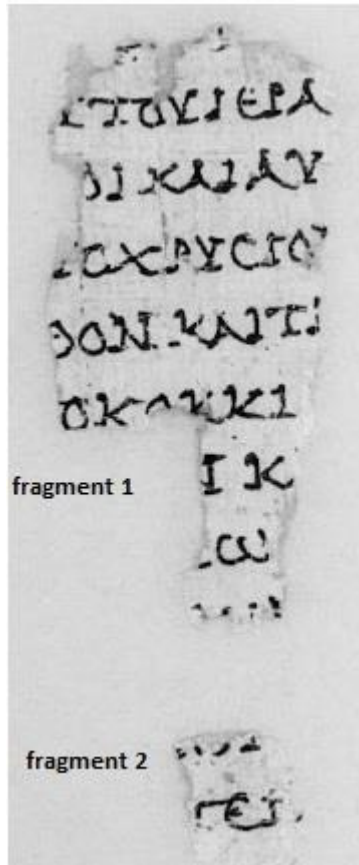


## DEAD SEA SCROLLS: TWO FRAGMENTS 7Q1[pap7QLXXExod]

Refuting the “scholarly” claims that it supports the Masoretic Text and not the Greek Septuagint

By John Litteral

### 7Q1 fragments #1 and #2



Cave #7, among the Dead Sea Scrolls, is unique in that it contained only Greek documents, with no Hebrew or Aramaic texts. Among the Greek documents, the text of which can be identified with certainty, are two papyrus fragments, which after an examination of the fibers, appear to belong to each other; they measure (together), about 2x7/8 inches, and contain Exodus 28:4-6, and possibly verse number seven, which I examine in this essay. Since only one side has writing, it is probable that the fragments are from a roll.

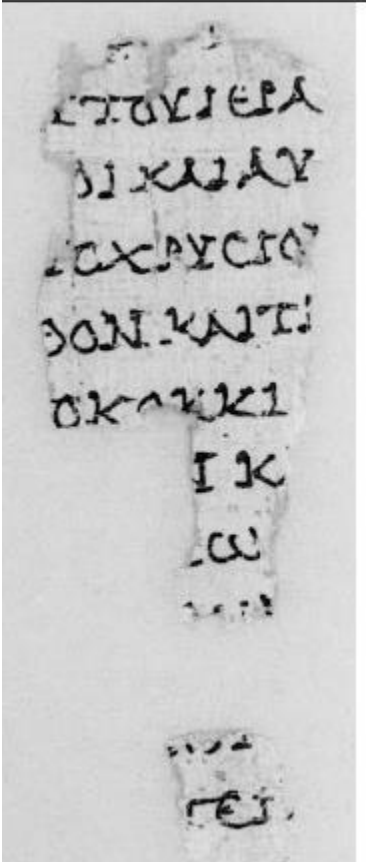
The uncial script is edged with small hooks or serifs as end-strokes of certain letters, and can be dated to around 100 B.C. The Greek letters alpha, kappa, and omega are each made with two strokes of the pen.<sup>1</sup>

Below is a reconstructed text that is from Bruce Metzger's book<sup>1</sup> called "Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Greek Paleography", which the information was taken from the "Discoveries in the Judean Desert series"<sup>2</sup>. This is one of the first examples of some scholars claiming that fragments of 7Q1 supports the Masoretic Text over the Greek Septuagint.

(Frag. 1)	1	[ρῶν τῷ ἀ]δ[ελ]φ[ῷ σου καὶ τοῖς]	[καὶ] τὸ κόκκ[ινον καὶ τὴν]	[σμέρον καὶ βύσσου κεκλω-]		
		[υἱοῖς α]β[ρα]μ[ὸς] ἱερα[τεῖν αὐ-]	[βύσσου]. Ὁ Κ[αὶ] ποιήσου-	[σμέρης, ἔργον ἰφάντων ποι-]		
		[τὸν ἐμ]οί. Ὁ Καὶ αὐ[τοῖς] λήψον-	[σιν τὴν ἐ]πω[μίδα ἐκ χρι-]	[κιλτοῦ· ὁ δὲ ἐπωμίδες συν-]		
		[ται] τὸ χρυσίου [καὶ τὸν ἀά-]	[σίον καὶ ἀ]κ[ρί]β[ον καὶ πορ-]	(Frag. 2)	[έχουσαι ἐ]σση[ται αὐτῷ ἐ-]	
	5	[κιν]θον καὶ τῇ[ν πορφύραν]	10	[φύρας καὶ κοκκ[ίνου νενη-]	15	[τέρα τὴν ἐ]τέρα[ν, ἐπὶ τοῖς]

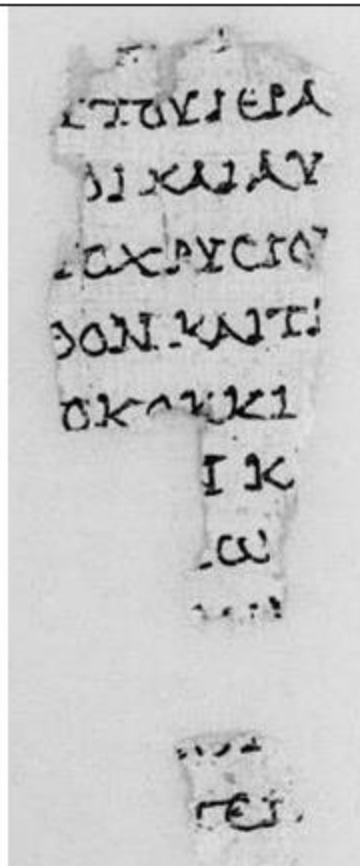
This reconstructed text is basically the same as another reconstructed text that I share below from Seth Ehorn's book called "Exodus and the New Testament". What one finds in the reconstructed Greek readings from these scholars is that every part of their reconstruction that is not found in the actual fragments is completely hypothetical. Every single letter and word found in the fragments of 7Q1 is accounted for in the Greek Septuagint. I have studied every single ink mark in these

fragments, and all of the places that you can be certain what the readings are is reckoned for in the Septuagint. In those places where it is uncertain what the ink mark represents is when these scholars claim that it supports the Masoretic Text over the Septuagint. And in their reconstruction, they will fill the gaps between the letters that can be seen with hypothetical readings that have no evidence whatsoever to prove that those are the true readings. I will demonstrate this further down as I show images of the fragments to prove my case.

	<p>[?? Unintelligible]</p> <p>ὁ τοῦ ἱερα</p> <p>οὶ καὶ αὐ</p> <p>τὸ χρυσίον</p> <p>θον καὶ τῇ</p> <p>ὁ κόκκι</p> <p>ν κ</p> <p>? π?ω</p> <p>? νη?</p> <p>?σον?</p> <p>?τέρ?</p>
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In the images on the **left**, I have placed the photocopy of 7Q1 on the left side, and the literal transcription on the right side. I placed question-marks on each end of the readings that I am uncertain about. Both sets of letters at the bottom on fragment #2 have question-marks because, while I can tell what a couple of letters are among the ink marks, I am uncertain about some of it, but I do go into detail later in the essay.

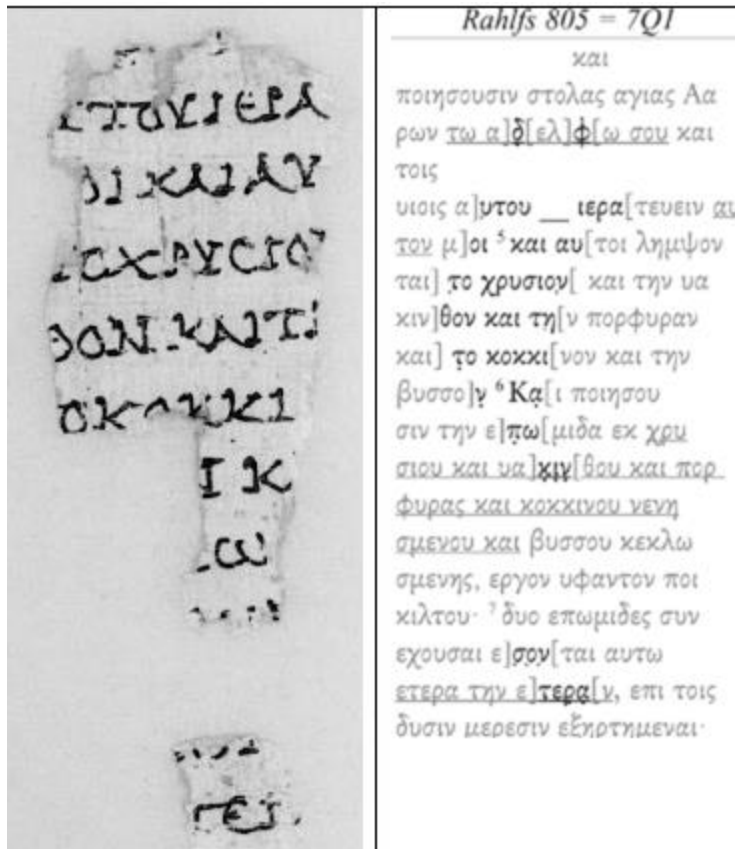
The fragments contain Uncial script, while the transcription is modern Greek script. If you are reading this essay, then you are probably fully aware of the difference.



? τ[ο]ῖς [μ]οῖς?  
<sup>4</sup> αὐτοῦ ἱερατεύειν  
 μοι <sup>5</sup> καὶ αὐτοὶ λήμψονται  
 τὸ χρυσίον καὶ τὴν  
 ὑάκινθον καὶ τὴν πορφύραν  
 καὶ τὸ κόκκινον καὶ  
 τὴν βύσσον <sup>6</sup> καὶ ποιήσουσιν  
 τὴν ἐ?π?μίδα ἐκ βύσσου  
 κεκλωσμένης? ἔργον ὑφαντὸν  
 ποικιλτοῦ <sup>7</sup> δύο ἐπωμίδες  
 συνέχουσα ?ἔσονται? αὐτῷ  
 ἑτέρα τὴν ?ἑτέραν? ἐπὶ τοῖς  
 δυοῖς μέρεσιν ἐξηρημέναι

At the **left**, is a side-by-side of the images of the fragments of 7Q1 (on the left side), compared to my simple reconstruction of the Greek Septuagint readings. I line up the Greek text from the Septuagint right beside each line of the fragments so that you can easily glance and compare. I have put the letters in bold and underlined them so that you can tell what the readings are from the fragments.

I have placed question-marks around the readings that I am not completely certain about. But in this essay, I do analyze and make speculations, and even refute some of the speculations made by some other scholars.



On the left is the reconstructed text that is found in Seth Ehorn's book called "Exodus in the New Testament". This reconstruction is nearly identical to the one found in the "Discoveries in the Judean Desert of Jordan" series. I placed his reconstruction beside a photo of the actual fragments.

#### Reconstructed Text Based Upon the Masoretic Text

4 ποιησουσιν στολας αγιας Ααρων τω α[δ]ελ[φ]ω σου και τοις υιοις α[υτου ιερα] τευειν αυτον μ[οι]

5 και αυτοι λημψονται το χρυσιον και την υακινθον και την πορφυραν και το κόκκινον και την βυσσο[ν]

6 Κα]ι ποιησουσιν την ε[πω]μιδα εκ χρυσιου και υακικθου και πορφυρας και κο[κιν]θου νενη σμενου και βυσσου κεκλωσμενης, εργον υφαντον ποικιλτου.

7 δυο επωμιδες συνεχουσαι ε[σον]ται αυτω ετερα την ε[τερα]ν, επι τοις δυσιν μερεσιν εξηρητημεναι.

#### Reconstructed Text Based Upon the Septuagint

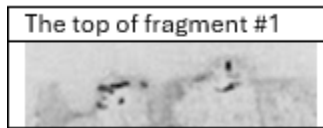
4 ποιήσουσιν στολάς αγίας Ααρων καὶ τ[ο?]ῖς [υ?]ίοις α[υτοῦ ιερα]τεύειν μ[οι]

5 καὶ αὐ]τοὶ λήμψονται [τὸ χρυσίον] καὶ τὴν ὑάκιν[θον καὶ τὴ]ν πορφύραν καὶ τ[ὸ κόκκι]νον καὶ τὴν βύσσο[ν]

6 κ]αὶ ποιήσουσιν τὴν ἐ[π?]ω[μ]ίδα ἐκ βύσσου κεκλωσμέ[ν]ης[?] ἔργον ὑφαντὸν ποικιλοῦ




7 δύο ἐπωμίδες συνέχουσα ??ἐ[σον]ται?? αὐτῷ ἑτέρα τὴν ??ἐ[τέρ]αν?? ἐπὶ τοῖς δυσὶ μέρεσιν ἐξηρητημέναι

## The Top of Fragment #1

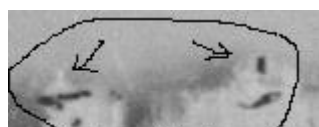



On the **left**, is the image of the ink marks at the very top of fragment #1. The claim made by some scholars is that it would read  $\alpha\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\omega$  (to brother), that is, the ink marks indicate a delta  $\delta$  on the left side, and a phi  $\phi$  on the right side. The word “brother” is not found here in the Greek Septuagint, but it is in the Masoretic Text as the Hebrew word  $\text{אָח}$  ( $\text{'âch}$ ). But the reading of these small ink marks is very uncertain, and it could be just about anything. (It is possible that those ink marks are from the word  $\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$  or/and the following word  $\upsilon\iota\omicron\iota\varsigma$ . The first ink mark on the left is unintelligible. But the ink mark on the right looks like it could be an iota from the word  $\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$  or the upsilon from  $\upsilon\iota\omicron\iota\varsigma$ . It is not an exact science at pinpointing the distance between line lengths on a fragment like this, which has no margins that are visible, and the letters are handwritten. All you can do is estimate. The following two lines has seven letters missing between the known scripts, and when you count seven letters from the top of fragment #1 to the beginning of the following line, it lands you around the words  $\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma \upsilon\iota\omicron\iota\varsigma$  of the Greek Septuagint reading. I add  $\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma \upsilon\iota\omicron\iota\varsigma$  in some of the reconstructions below, but in no way do I seriously consider that to be certain. Just pure speculation.

**Below** are three images. The one on the far left is the ink mark at the very top of the fragment on the right side, while the other two are letters that the ink mark could be, such as iota and an upsilon.

top ink mark	An iota	An upsilon
		

Some scholars claim that the top-right ink mark is a phi  $\phi$ . At first glance it looks possible, but when you compare it to another phi in another fragment in cave 7 (since 7Q1 does not have a phi), the bottom stroke of the phi comes down much lower than all the other letters. But when you look below at the image of the top of fragment #1, with arrows pointing to the ink marks, the ink mark on the left is basically level with the ink mark on the right. Therefore, the image **below** allows you to compare the top of fragment #1 to an upsilon Y and a phi  $\Phi$  found in another fragment in cave 7.

The top of fragment #1	7QLXXEpJer
	

Notice that the phi  $\Phi$  drops down significantly farther than the upsilon Y, and upsilons drop down more than a lot of other letters in these fragments. This demonstrates that some scholars are wrong about the ink marks at the top of fragment #1 indicating the word  $\alpha\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\omega$ .

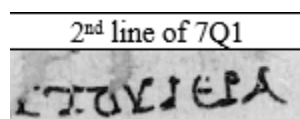
So, the claim is made by some scholars in order to make it appear that the 7Q1 fragment supports the Masoretic Text. The pattern that I see with these two 7Q1 fragments is that each time the readings are unintelligible, some scholars choose to pick words that support the Masoretic Text (MT) over the Septuagint (LXX), because that upholds a narrative that certain scholars prefer in order to convey a supremacy of the Masoretic Text over the Septuagint. But what I see in these choices in the transcription are hypothetical reconstructed readings. Every single intelligible reading in these two fragments of 7Q1 are in support of the Septuagint. To make his case that these fragments support the MT over the LXX, Seth Ehorn, in his book “Exodus in the New Testament” (pg. 25), uses terms like ‘strongly suggests’ and ‘seems to evidence’ in those places when it is not possible to be sure what the readings are. He also makes the case, like I have seen many times when scholars make similar cases in other manuscript readings, he will use the argument that ‘line lengths’ would suggest a reading that supports the Masoretic Text over the Septuagint, because the distance between the words that you see in each line is either longer or shorter than what supports the LXX. Predicting the length of the readings in the manuscript from line to line, especially when you have no margins showing on either side of 7Q1, is not an exact calculation. For one, the manuscript is handwritten, and the script is not 100% predictable like it would be on a typewriter or computer word document. Secondly, many handwritten manuscripts that are complete and in their entirety, you can see that the beginning of each line might be fairly even all the way down, but most lines at the other end of the line are all uneven from one another.



As you can see in the image **on the left**, the section of another Dead Sea Scrolls fragment of the Minor Prophets (8HevXIIgr), the right side of the readings are not lined up perfectly, rather they have different numbers of letters per row, even seven letter differences. It is not possible to be certain what the letter lengths are in 7Q1 when both sides of the margins no longer exist, therefore only speculation can be made about the letter lengths in the fragments of 7Q1.

There is absolutely no concrete evidence to any of the claims by Seth Ehorn, he relies upon hypothetical and a ‘shoulda, coulda, woulda’ argument, as do many scholars who are towing the line of the Masoretic Text supremacy.

### **A Septuagint Variant Reading in 7Q1**

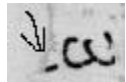


The second line of 7Q1 does have what would be considered a variant Septuagint reading, αὐτοῦ ἱερατεύειν μοι. The standard Septuagint reading has αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ ἱερατεύειν μοι. This fragment omits (εἰς τὸ). This does not change the meaning nor how it would be translated. This word order is also found in Exodus 31:10 where the (εἰς τὸ) was not added between αὐτοῦ ἱερατεύειν.

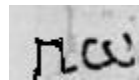
Perhaps the omission of the (εἰς τὸ) is the original reading for Exodus 28:4, and that it may have been added later on by a copyist and eventually became the standard reading. Seth Ehorn, following some other scholars, makes the case that the reading would support the MT and suggests that αὐτον would come after ἱερατεύειν, and the text would read αὐτοῦ ἱερατεύειν αὐτον μοι. Again, this is completely hypothetical and

has no concrete evidence to prove this reading, but Seth does list a few Medieval Greek manuscripts that have that reading (ms.72-thirteenth century, ms.376-fifteenth century) and a correction in an eleventh century manuscript (ms.318-tenth/eleventh century). Citing those as manuscript evidence is a weak attempt at towing the MT supremacy line.

### The Eighth Line Down



If ἐπωμίδα is the correct reading, which I do think that it is, as do most scholars, then the pi Π proceeding the omega has an unusual hook (serif) at the bottom right of the letter. Perhaps that is the way that the copyist of 7Q1 wrote it, but there is no other letter pi on those fragments to compare it to.



Here is an example of an etch that I made that probably resembles what the pi looked like beside the omega.

### The Bottom of Fragment #1

The very bottom of fragment #1 is somewhat unintelligible. Seth Ehorn claims that the reading supports the Masoretic Text by reading νακινφου. When closely examining the ink marks, it is possible that the first marks that appear could be the top of the letter κ, and the last letter could be a ν, but it could very well be something different because it is not really possible to be 100 percent certain. But the claim that the middle letter is an iota is completely out of the question. At first glance from an inexperienced eye, it looks like it could possibly be an iota, but when you compare it with the other iotas above in the same fragment, it is obvious that it is not because all other iotas in the fragment have a hook that sticks out to the left. Below images are evidence of that.

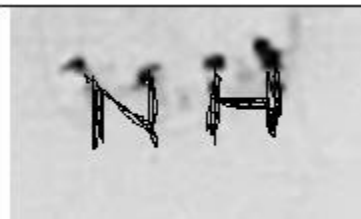
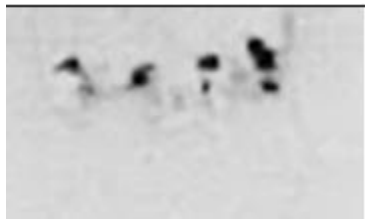


The image on the left is the ink marks in question, and the ink mark that is circled is what Seth Ehorn and other scholars claim is an iota. The image on the right is an iota 3 lines above on the same fragment.

Those are obviously not the same. Regardless of what it is, it does not support the reading that Seth Ehorn is suggesting. Without having more exposure of the ink marks, which have been lost, it is better to settle with uncertainty. If I had to speculate, I would suggest the existing ink marks are the **νη** found in the word κεκλωσμέ**νη**ς. This would account for what I mentioned above about the one mark not having a hook, which rules out it being an iota. The only place in the fragment (4 lines above) that has an **η**, has no hook (serif), and it looks similar to the bottom mark being mentioned.



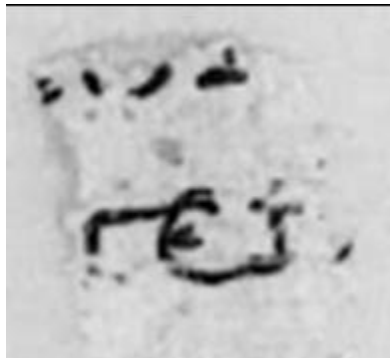
The image on the **left** is the mark in question, and the one on the right is part of an eta **η** that is 4 lines above. That eta **η** is only partial because the fragment stops and does not reveal the rest of the letter. But it is agreed that it is an **η**. That looks more likely than the iota recommended by Seth Ehorn.



The image on the **left** is a close-up of the ink marks, and the one on the right is the actual image, the one on the left is my etch that shows the possible reading, which I recommend.

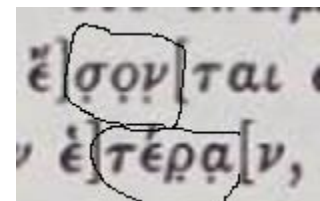
I only make this as a suggestion because there is no way to be completely certain. But if I am correct, then it is in favor of the Septuagint reading, not the Masoretic Text.

### Fragment #2



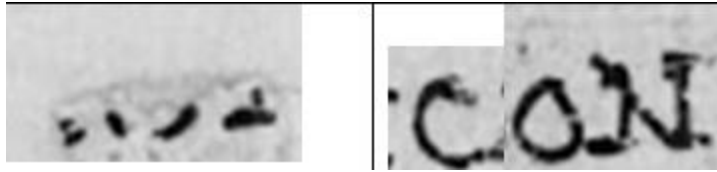
Fragment #2 of 7Q1 is not easy to figure out, and I think the reading could possibly belong to another place in the book of Exodus or somewhere else in the Septuagint.

Seth Ehorn and some scholars do suggest that the readings in fragment #2 has the words that are found in the Septuagint, that being ἔσονται, and then ἐτέραν. Some scholars do appear to admit that it is difficult to be certain if those are the correct readings because they have designed a reconstruction of the readings, as seen in the image on the **right**, that have dots placed underneath some of the letters as indicators of the reading being uncertain.



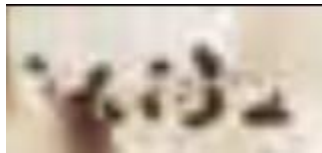
I highly doubt that fragment #2 is what it is claimed to be by some scholars, especially the top being ἔσονται.





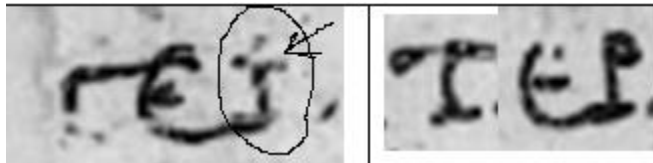
In the images on the **left**, the left side has fragment #2, on the right side I provide 2 images, one is a sigma, and then both an omicron and nu from fragment #1. By

comparing them side by side, only the nu looks like it possibly matches. The omicron looks very unlikely because even if we consider that fragment #2 was an omicron with faded ink, the size of the omicron would be significantly larger than any other omicron in fragment #1. As for the sigma, which in uncial script, looks like a capital C, it does not look like the ink mark in fragment #2 supports the likelihood of being a sigma. I will just settle with uncertainty about what the top of fragment #2 reads.



Another image, on the **left**, that is intriguing is when fragments #1 and #2 are placed together, it looks like they could match.

In order for this to match, it looks like an omicron is possible, but there would have to be a significant amount of ink that would be faded out. And the first letter would be distorted and hard to identify. Strangely, the photo of fragments #1 and #2 connected together looks slightly different because the potential omicron doesn't look as wide as it does in the other image. This is likely because the image of the fragments together are of lesser quality than the other that was enhanced by infrared.



In the images on the **left**, on the far left side is the reading from fragment #2 at the bottom. On the right side are images from fragment #1 that have the letters that are

being suggested by Seth Ehorn and other scholars for fragment #2. It looks possible and perhaps likely, but if that is correct, then the rho **ρ** in fragment #2 looks a little different due to the fact that all the other places in fragment #1 that have **ρ** do not cross through the middle on the left side of the letter like we see in the image above of fragment #2. Perhaps the scribe was a little sloppy in this case.

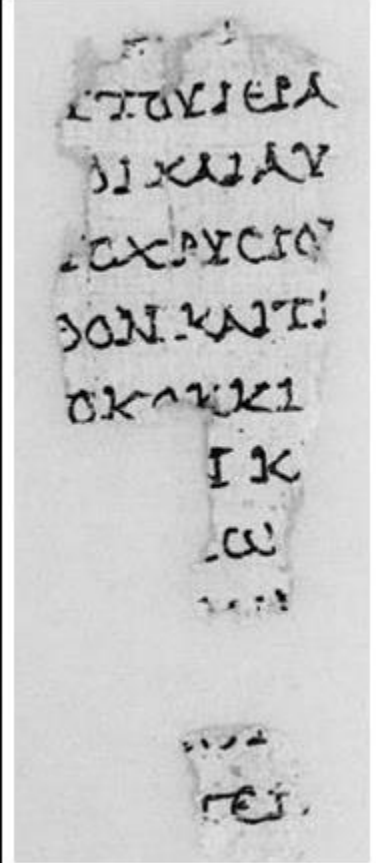
Fragment #2	7QLXXEpJer

One possibility about fragment #2 is that it is part of the same manuscript in another section of the Septuagint. Instead of the third letter being a rho **ρ**, it does look similar to a psi **ψ**. The only place that I can find in the Septuagint that has **τψ** is in the book

of the Wisdom of Solomon 2:8 with the word **στψώμεθα**. When you compare the letter in fragment #2 with another psi **ψ** from cave 7, they look very similar to one another.

I realize that this is unlikely, and it may be that it is a sloppy **ρ**, and that the reading may be **ἐτέραν**.

## Greek and English Interlinear Reconstruction of 7Q1

	<p>4 ?[τοῖς υἱοῖς]?  sons  <u>αὐτοῦ</u> <u>ἱερα</u>τεύειν  his serve as priests</p> <p>μοι <sup>5</sup> <u>καὶ αὐτοὶ</u> λήμψονται  to me and they  <u>τὸ χρυσίον</u> καὶ τὴν  the gold</p> <p>ὑάκινθον <u>καὶ τὴν</u> πορφύραν  hyacinth and the  (blue)  καὶ <u>τὸ κόκκινον</u> καὶ  the scarlet  τὴν βύσσον <sup>6</sup> <u>καὶ ποιήσουσιν</u>  fine linen and  τὴν ἐπι<sup>ω</sup>μίδα ἐκ βύσσου  shoulder-strap</p> <p>κεκλωσμέν<sup>η</sup>ς ἔργον ὑφαντὸν  spun  ποικιλτοῦ <sup>7</sup> δύο  ἐπι<sup>ω</sup>μίδες συνέχου-  σαι ἔ<sup>σ</sup>ονται αὐτῷ ἐτέρα  there shall be  τὴν ἐτέρα<sup>ν</sup> ἐπὶ τοῖς δυοῖ  another  μέρεσιν ἐξηρητημέναι</p>
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On the **left** is a Greek and English interlinear reconstruction of the 7Q1 fragments. And **below** is an English translation with all the words in the fragments in bold and underlined.

4 And these are the garments which they shall make: the breast-plate, and the shoulder-piece, and the full-length robe, and the tunic with a fringe, and the tire, and the girdle; and they shall make holy garments for Aaron and his ?sons? to serve as priests to me as priests. 5 And they shall take the gold, and the blue, and the purple, and the scarlet, and the fine linen. 6 And they shall make the shoulder-strap of fine linen spun, the woven work of the embroiderer. 7 ?There shall be? two shoulder-straps joined one to ?another?, fastened on the two sides.

## Sources

1 Bruce M. Metzger, Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: an introduction to Greek Paleography, Publisher New York : Oxford University Press, 1981, ISBN:9780195029246, 0195029240

2 M.Baillet, J. T. Milik, and R. de Vaux, O. P., Les 'Oetits Grottes' de Qumran (Discoveries in the Judean Desert of Jordan, iii; Oxford, 1962), Textes, pp. 142 f.; Planches, xxx.

3 Seth M. Ehorn, Exodus in the New Testament, 2022, Bloomsbury Publishing, ISBN 9780567702784, 0567702782







